

12 December 1961

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NOTE BY THE SECRETARIES

to the

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

on

DEPLOYMENT OF DAVY CROCKETT TO EUROPE (C)

The attached memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), I-17328/61, dated 8 December 1961, subject as above, together with its Enclosures, is circulated for information.

P. J. BLOUIN

M. J. INGELIDO

Joint Secretariat

12-657

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JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

DEC 8 1961

REFER TO: I-17323/61

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: Deployment of DAVY CROCKETT to Europe (C)

There is attached a copy of a letter from the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs on the above subject, together with a copy of my reply. Your attention is invited to the policy guidance, as directed by Secretary McNamara, which is contained in the letter to Mr. Kohler.

Paul H. Nitze

Paul H. Nitze
Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA)

2 Enclosures
a/s

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

INTERVALS:

27 October 1961

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Dear Paul:

One of the briefing papers prepared for the Gilpatric visit, "US Military Preparedness Actions" states in paragraph 11 a. that "The Army is implementing the decision to deploy 171 Davy Crockett launchers with warheads to Europe by December 1961." As far as I am aware, the Department of State has not consulted on this decision. I would like to point out that the deployment of Davy Crockett launchers for US forces has at least three important foreign policy implications which should be taken into account.

First, addition of these weapons to the NATO arsenal in central Europe makes more difficult our efforts to get our ideas on NATO strategy accepted. Nuclear weapons of such small size tend to blur even further the distinction between conventional and nuclear weapons.

Second, equipping of US forces only with these weapons can lead to charges of discrimination by our Allies. It is my understanding that we earlier decided to eliminate these weapons from the MAP programs for other NATO forces. The fact of their possession by US forces is bound to become fairly quickly known and to raise questions in the minds of our Allies as to why they are not permitted to have them.

Finally, the deployment of Davy Crocketts complicates much further the difficult question of control over the use of nuclear weapons. As you know, in accordance with the President's NSC decision of April 21, 1961, we are presently seeking to improve procedures for the control of nuclear weapons. It would seem self-evident that the Davy Crockett, because of its dispersion and the small number of men involved in its operation, is especially difficult to control effectively. This would be all the more true, of course, if the weapons were dispersed to our Allies. At least until new electronic mechanisms for the control of nuclear weapons are perfected and installed, therefore, it seems to me questionable that we should deploy these weapons to NATO Europe.

Sincerely,

Foy D. Kohler
Assistant Secretary

The Honorable
Paul H. Nitze,
Assistant Secretary of Defense.



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

REFER TO: I-17,323/61

6 December 1961

Dear Foy:

In reply to your letter of 27 October 1961 concerning DAVY CROCKETT, I have discussed the foreign policy and other implications with Secretary McNamara. We appreciate the concerns which you express; however, the Secretary feels that these weapons may be urgently needed by our forces in the event the Berlin crisis comes to a head and that short-run military considerations are overriding. Accordingly, he has decided to proceed with the deployment.

In the long term, in the light of cost and other problems, it is less certain as to the extent to which we will need this weapons system in Europe. We do not foresee control as a major problem since DAVY CROCKETT is subject to the same procedures now applicable to other delivery means, and since we plan to incorporate in this weapon and others a control device that will prevent unauthorized use, beginning within the next 18 months.

We are sympathetic to the other points raised in your letter, particularly the "equality" aspect; but, in view of the Berlin-related nature of this deployment, and the fact that future deployments of this weapon system for our own forces have not been decided, we would prefer to postpone consideration of this matter in NATO as long as possible. In the event it is raised by others, we would have to then consider how best to proceed.

Sincerely,

/signed/

Paul H. Nitze

Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA)

The Honorable Foy D. Kohler
Assistant Secretary of State
for European Affairs

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